

VZCZCXRO2064
RR RUEHRN RUEHROV
DE RUEHKM #1097 2660615
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 230615Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1799
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KAMPALA 001097

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/21/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [UG](#)
SUBJECT: UGANDA: NRM LAUNCHES MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION DRIVE

REF: KAMPALA 01069

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Aaron Sampson for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Uganda's ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) recently embarked on a nation-wide campaign to register all card-carrying party members. The program is spearheaded by NRM Secretary General Amama Mbabazi, who doubles as Museveni's Cabinet Minister for Security. Having fused the NRM Secretariat with Ugandan state security services, Mbabazi's registration campaign may ultimately end up singling out opposition supporters while shoring up Mbabazi's own eroded popularity within the NRM. End Summary.

NRM National Membership Database

¶2. (SBU) Local press reports indicate that the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) has begun a nation-wide program to register every card-carrying NRM member in advance of the 2011 presidential elections. NRM Secretary General Amama Mbabazi, who will head the registration campaign, said the NRM would shortly deliver registration books to local party leaders. "Every parish chief," said Mbabazi, "must know and be able to identify who is NRM in his village." Mbabazi said the NRM would use the registration lists and responses to party questionnaires to craft a more responsive platform in advance of the 2011 elections.

When Party and State Security Collide

¶3. (C) Mbabazi is also Minister of Security responsible for overseeing Uganda's internal and external security services. On August 21, Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, an on-again off-again presidential insider who spent over a year as Uganda's senior representative to the UN, told the Mission that Mbabazi had merged the NRM's secretariat with Uganda's security services and that both institutions now operate out of the same headquarters building. Ayebare also said many senior NRM leaders were unhappy with this fusion not because it further blurred lines between party and state institutions, but because it resulted in a dysfunctional party secretariat.

¶4. (C) Last week the blurred line between the NRM and state security led opposition Parliamentarians to walk out of Parliament to protest a government decision to fund 5,000 secondary school "patriotism clubs" allegedly under the aegis of the Security Ministry (reftel).

Comment: Party Census or Political Tool?

¶5. (C) The obvious fear is that Mbabazi's plan could be another tool to isolate and identify individuals sympathetic to opposition parties in advance of the 2011 presidential elections. The image of local leaders - Mbabazi seems to assume that all local chiefs belong to the NRM - carefully inscribing the individual names of NRM party faithful into ledger books provided by Security Minister Mbabazi is bound to make independents and other Ugandans think twice about their party affiliation and the sanctity of their vote.

¶6. (C) The NRM membership campaign probably also serves to strengthen Museveni and Mbabazi's power within the party. NRM leaders are likely looking to prevent an embarrassing repeat of the 2006 legislative election when 37 NRM members, frustrated by the lack of internal democracy within the party, defeated hand-picked NRM candidates by running for parliament as political independents. With the registration campaign, party members could be identified earlier and threatened with permanent alienation from the NRM if they bolted to seek election as independents. Mbabazi may also use his control of the registration campaign to boost his own embattled position within the party by withholding registration to those in the NRM who do not support him. Mbabazi's position as Secretary General is up for re-election in late-2010, and he will likely face stiff competition for the NRM's contested top spot.

LANIER